TRACER

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ILLINOIS CORPORATION (not for profit)

6422 Main Street, Union, Illinois 60180

Telephone: 815-923-2267

Prepared by: Gwendolyn Danner, Lucille Maguire, Thresile Mulvenna.

Volume III - No. 3 Newsletter Spring, 1977

REPLIES TO PREVIOUS PLEAS FOR HELP.

Would it not be nice if we could say that all the things we are asking for the Museum, had been furnished unto us! Unfortunately, it does not work that way, nor that rapidly. Of the nine individual hopes, number 8, the inquiry about C. Clare Moore, is the only one on which we received a reply and that was only partial. But we are assured that the knowledge can be obtained from another person.

Nor did anyone come forward to tell us about the train wreck or the school picture. We still need the information.

We do have a lot of answers for the "What-Is-It?" donated by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Thomas. Since neither they nor any of us could identify the foot-long article Mrs. McEachren sent a peicture of it to Americana which published it in their July, 1976 issue. They have now published the replies they received: Jean Sigman, Richmond, Virginia identified it as "a head scratcher much used by... those who wore wigs or elaborate headdresses, which often made the scalp itch, and rather than disarrange the elaborate coif, the slender instrument was used to afford relief". Mrs. N. H. Selm, St. Joseph, Michigan says it is a back scratcher. Larry Landsman of Bayside, New York asked if the object in question could have been one of those very specialized items used for scratching under a cast, splint or boot? He thought he recalled having seen a similar object that was so used. Walter Domrese of Williston, North Dakota thought it could be a tool used to emboss leather-bridles and saddles, maybe billfolds or purses. Mrs. Richard A. Dare wrote in that her grandmother had a similar object with a mother-of-pearl handle she used for sewing, to turn belts, straps, etc. Lillian R. Moore of East Orland, Maine, suggested it was an orange peeler and Ruth E. Brodrick of Santa Anna, California thought it could be part of an elaborate dresser set, perhaps a cuticle trimmer. So much for the article in Americana. But when it was suggested that it could have been used in bookbinding or embossing the covers, Mrs. McEachren took it to a bindery where that idea was also refuted. So: It is still a "What-is-it?" A late idea was Gary Dooley's of Woodstock. He thought it could be a shaper for rounding the tops of bullets in molds. This was checked out and proved false.

MORE PLEAS FOR HELP.

Our appeals this quarter are many and varied. First, and very interesting is an appeal from a gentleman named William Fox. He is producing a large format, illustrated book on old mills in North America between 1600 and 1900. He is interested in wind or water powered mills; grist, saw, wollen or textile, early paper, hydro, cider, flint, powder, snuff or iron. He asks that information contain the location of the mill or millsite with the nearest town; who owns it; what kind of mill it is or was; its use today and any miscellaneous information you wish to give. Any such information will also be filed at the Museum.

Articles Specially Desired:

A wall mounted telephone with crank to turn to call operator.

A high wheel bicycle.

A real old ice-box-not refrigerator, but the kind that needed a cake of ice.

An old fashioned kitchen cabinet with a flour sifter in the top.

Left over Bicentennial items.

More manikins - especially one of a sitting lady.

STILL LOOKING FOR SPONSORS FOR SPECIAL PROJECT.

Do not think that any donation is unacceptable. Many small bits of money will take care of big jobs. However, at present, there are five restoration jobs that are available to be undertaken by either individuals or clubs and made their own special portion of the Museum. Restoration and putting under glass of the Civil War flag will cost approximately $350.00; Restoration of the melodeon, $500.00; Restoration of the clavichord, $1000.00; Restoration of the square piano, $750.00; Repair and restoration of the 1862 county map, $1200.00. All of these amounts are estimates.

NEW MEMBERS

Maybe we should not place our appeals and their answers first--but we cannot take the chance of your being interrupted and never getting back to them if we put them last. But now we turn to very pleasant news--a list of new members. Mr. & Mrs. C.A. Dalke of 745 South Charlotte Street in Lombard have joined us, as have Mr. & Mrs. Lynn E. Ellison, 9814 Main Street of Hebron. Dunham Woman's Club, Mrs. Stuart Wells, 1617 Route 23, Harvard, IL and Alice (Mrs. Arnt) Anderson, 5319 Route 14 of the same city also recently became members.

AND IT'S SPRING AGAIN.

So we have other stories of the society and its members. First, we are re-opening on May eleventh. You will remember that we closed the library with the necessary publicity during the winter months. Our fuel bills were eating the museum up, so that it was decided not to open unless a prior appointment was made. With this arrangement, the museum continued to serve; and during this time, much was learned about better ways to serve groups such as school children when th y came. It has been determined that we can give the teachers prior help that will make the trip far more successful.

Also a docents' workshop was held in March, on the twelfth, that was very well attended. After a period of discussion as to what a docent must do, and questions as to what one may do, there were a number of tours, each docent showing off the room in which he or she usually worked. I think

everyone saw something new no matter how many times he had visited. When one thinks that we do have more than ten thousand items, all concerned with this county in which we live and its history, it is easy to understand how one can come and come again and still find new things all the time.

OTHER SOCIETY NEWS.

Shortly after the Winter Tracer came out, the Museum was told by Betty Oberg that she had had a meeting with George May, who is an active member of the state Beekeepers's Association. Mr. May is interested in setting up a display in the Museum to honor the late Dr. Charles Miller, formerly of Marengo. Dr. Miller was one of the early authors and scientists in the study of beekeeping. We hope to see this accomplished this spring.

MENTIONS NOT PREVIOUSLY MADE.

Always nice to tell about those who have been kind to the Museum, and our list of thank yous in this Tracer are for many things--monetary donations, items that will be on exhibit, and work freely given to make the exhibits show up well, as well as items to exhibit on, and in.

Monetary donations came from the Harvard Grange; the Union Garden Club; the Grace Ladies Aid Society of Woodstock; Hebron American Legion Auxiliary (Mrs. Agnes Wappler, Box 21, Alden); Paul C. Hoffman Post #253, American Legion Auxiliary (Velora Karla-Treasurer, Richmond); Richmond Area Pioneer Club (Ruth Schmitz, Richmond); Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 356, Crystal Lake; Alden-Hebron Grange (Helen Schulz, Sec., Box 132, Hebron); St. Paul's Ladies Aid Society (Mrs. Elsie Piske, 207 South Page, Harvard): Woodstock Builders Association, (Box 95, Woodstock); Melodie Archer, 623 Riley Drive, Marengo. A memorial for Frances Garland, long time teacher in the Woodstock schools.

Perhaps this would be a good place to mention that Chemung township included the Historical Museum in their annual budget for a hundred dollars. What a help if every township would do likewise!

OTHER ACQUISITIONS.

We now have a chimney for our embossed brass kerosene lamp, circa 1890. The donor was Vail & Jacks, Antiques of Woodstock. It was most gratefully received. Older people to whom these were ordinary items of daily living cannot imagine the impression they make on the young people of today. Through the courtesy of Mayor William LeFew, the City of Harvard presented their new Bicentennial book, Harvard Area 1829-1976, to the Museum. It is a history of the Harvard area, Chemung, Dunham, Hartland and Alden Townships and has already been in use by McHenry County college students.

The Historical Society is also extending thanks to Roberta (Mrs. Frank) Horn of Harvard for the subscription to the Harvard Herald.

Our somewhat belated public thanks are also made for the protective chains and posts for the Museum, provided by the Kiwanis Club of Woodstock. Mr. C.W. Coons, who was the project chairman stated that all materials were either donated or provided at cost by the following concerns, all of Woodstock: Hall and Eckert Lumber Co., Howell's Carpet Gallery, Sherwin-Williams Paint Co., Woodstock Brick and Supply Co., Woodstock True Value Hardware Store. And Plasti-Chain Corporation of Hebron. Kiwanians Lloyd Church and Robert Lange used their trucks to transport all materials to the worksites and museum and Kiwanians and their families put in about seventy-five man-hours on the project.

MORE BUSINESSES TO THANK.

We extend our thanks for the six gallons of paint recently donated by the Cotter Company of Cary, Mr. Cliff Atsness, general manager. And we are very grateful to the donors of the pegboard which will be used to hold exhibits: McHenry Lumber Company, Patterson Lumber Company, Steve Otis Construction Company and McHenry Farm Service, the last three from Marengo, Alexander Lumber Company and Edward Hines Lumber Company of Crystal Lake and Sandy Walkup of Crystal Lake, who also donated two of the sets of rollers for the exhibit cases. Thanks are also surely due the men who put the rollers on the cases: R.A. Heiman, Art Jenner, and Sandy Walkup of Crystal Lake; Jack Satorius and Everett Thomas of Woodstock. Every time a case has to be moved their names will be recalled with gratitude.

OTHER ACQUISITIONS.

An iron cultivator has been given to the Museum by George Schmitt and Mrs. Eleanor Corson donated a flat bed wheelborrow. The collection of farm machinery is appropriate to our county's early history.

Mrs. Fred Charles of Woodstock gave the four page, Volume III, No. 30 of the New Era for June 22, 1876, W.D. Ringland editor and proprietor, $1.50 per year, to the museum. This was another items the Society was pleased to receive.

AND WE GAVE.

Our McHenry County Historical Society and our Historical Museum are concerned with our county's history. Therefor, when several books of the court dockets of Winnebago--ledgers, really--came into the Museum's possession, we handed them on to the Rockford Museum Center in Rockford with the understanding that they will do the same for us when something comes into their collection that belongs more in McHenry County.

SHARE AND PRESERVE McHENRY COUNTY HISTORY, JOIN THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

A little detective work is necessary, if anyone is kind enought to undertake it. The museum staff is looking for information on George Pyott of Algonquin, semi-pro baseball manager, and his team, the Pyotts.

ITEMS FROM ELSEWHERE.

Ex President Gerald Ford signed a bill into law on October 4, 1976, which gives a tax incentive to encourage the preservation of historic structures. This law, The Tax Re-form Act of 1976, Section 2124 of Public Law 94-455, gives a five year tax break to persons who rehabilitate historic structures. If you think you might qualify, before filing next year, consult your tax consultant or contact the Internal Revenue Service.

Lake County Museum re-opened February ninth on an admission fee basis: 50¢ for adults, 25¢ for students and senior citizens, 10¢ per member for pre-scheduled groups from within their county, 20¢ per member for pre-scheduled groups from without the county. Just something to think about. Our heating bills through the cold months were astronomical: over six hundred dollars for the two winter months we were open.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can we make our classroom look more like an early one room school? While visitors have been very complimentary about the museum as a whole, the schoolroom receives quite a bit of adverse criticism because it looks too modern. One of the heating stoves from Eckert Hall is to

be moved into one corner, which may help, but we really need a teacher's desk that is truly old and many more old-type desks for the children. A set of the old Beacon Reader phonetic charts; a set of old maps--maybe the kind on a tripod?--and an old drinking fountain, would help. A recitation bench is a must, say some. What about a Frances Willard picture? What do you think? And where can we obtain your suggestions' fulfillments?

OBITUARY.

Always the saddest news to put in any periodical is that of the demise of an associate. The members of the Historical Society were saddened by the death of one of its long-time members. Mrs. Frances Garland, formerly a teacher and an elementary principal in Woodstock, died recently at the home of her daughter at Cos Cob, Connecticut. She was ninety-two years old. Every time we lose one of these senior members our society is a little poorer. The Historical Society was the recipient of three monetary donations in her memory.

ANNUAL MEETING COMING UP.

Yes, it is almost that time again. In fact, June twelfth is the date; and the time will be one thirty, p. m. As of this writing, the program is not yet arranged but Betty Oberg, director from Marengo, is in charge of that detail and will plan something special and specially nice. Sandy Walkup is chairman of the nominating committee, and is to have the able help of Shuji Kimura and Nancy Fike.

Watch your local paper for further details, save Sunday, June twelfth and PLAN TO ATTEND.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Tracer committee wishes to thank Alice and Leta Clark and Nancy Fike for the interesting paragraphs which follow. Similar information on things of interest to our Society's members is always welcomed by our committee.

On April 16th, the Northern Regional Meeting of the Congress of Illinois Historical Societies and Museums was held at the First Methodist Church of Glen Ellyn. The McHenry County Historical Society was represented by Ruth and Otis Cripe & Alice and Leta Clark. In the first session, Keith Sculle, National Register Coordinator from the Department of Conservation, spoke on "The New Illinois Preservation Act." The second speaker, Ozzie Reynolds from the Illinois Historical Society, discussed "Historical Markers".

Following a delicious lunch served at the church, the participants were bused to Stacy's Tavern which was built in 1846 by Moses Stacy as a home for his family and an inn for travelers. In 1968, the village of Glen Ellyn purchased the tavern which had been made into five apartments and with the help of the Glen Ellyn Historical Society restored it to its original condition so that it may be a living reminder to all of a life of long ago.

Incidentally, a Mr. Avery Wolffrum of Palatine noticed our McHenry County badges and told us that he had visited our Museum after learning about it from a sign at the Railroad Museum. He was most complimentary about our collection and said that he has been urging his friends to visit the Museum and that it is worth the drive out to do so. Mr. Wolffrum thought our Museum was great. It's nice to have an outsider feel that way.

"VISIT THE MUSEUM - IT'S WORTH THE DRIVE TO DO SO"

FORMER McHENRY COUNTY ARTISTS

The McHenry County Historical Society is conducting a quest for names and information concerning persons from this county who have gained recognition in their chosen field. Our Music Room at the Museum contains framed copies of sheet music composed in McHenry County. The question as to whether our area had ever produced any notable artists came up at a board meeting recently. As a result of a little detective work, it was discovered that McHenry was the birthplace of two women who are accomplished artists.

The first of these artists was Clara Belle Owen who was born in 1854 and lived in McHenry for many years. She studied art in Paris and became an excellent painter.

The second artist, Pauline Palmer (usually called Polly), was born in 1867, the daughter of Nicholas and Francisca Spangemacher Lenards. She was the wife of Albert E. Palmer. Polly studied in Paris and had paintings on exhibit there. In Chicago, she became famous as a portrait painter, expecially of children. Some of her work is part of the permanent collection at the Art Institute. Mrs. Palmer was mentioned as a famous woman in Illinois in The Intelligencer, a monthly magazine published at Kankakee during our Sesquicentennial Year. She received a silver medal for a painting exhibited in Paris and a bronze medal at the St. Louis Exposition. In 1907, she won both the Young Fortnightly Prize at the Art Institute and the Marshall Field Award. Polly Palmer died in 1938.

The above information was secured through the courtesy of Mr. Harold Owen, one of our members, and his daughter, Mrs. Pat Ahlberg. Both are from McHenry. Mr. Owen has two of Polly Palmer's paintings in his livingroom, and Mrs. Ahlberg is the proud possessor of still another of this artist's works.

If any of our readers possesses one of Polly Palmer's paintings and would donate it to the Museum, the Historical Society would be most grateful.

Do you know of any famous artist who once lived in your area? If so, please send us all the information that you can.

GOLDEN AGE MEMBERSHIP - WHOSE IS THE GREATEST?

Who is the oldest member of the Historical Society? Could it be Lettie Brauer, of Portland, Oregon who is ninety-three? Or, Mrs. Earl Crandall of Roselle, Ill. who was ninety three last August? If anyone out there is older than these two ladies, please let us know.

Lettie might also be a contender for the honor of being the member living at the greatest distance from McHenry County although we have a number of members living at a distance. There's Mrs. Leila Manor of Hemet, Calif.; Dr. Myrtle Shaw of Albany, N. Y.; Mrs. Theresa Zuck of Auburn, Washington; and Mrs. Clinton Martin of Summerfield, Florida. Although the majority of our members reside in McHenry County, there's a scattering of members throughout the United States.

Lettie Murphy was born on a farm and lived on Greenwood Rd. as a girl. After her marriage to Mr. Brauer, she lived in Chicago. Widowed when the oldest of her three children was only ten, she had the responsibility of earning a living for her little family. Times were hard, but they never went hundry, and she recalls these years as happy ones.

Lettie has long been a faithful member of the Historical Society. When she was in her 80's, she took the train from Chicago to Crystal Lake and walked from the railroad station to the annual meeting at Veteran Acres.

She now resides with a daughter in Portland, Oregon.

The Tracer's winter edition carried an article titled "How Did Ostend Get Its Name?" Mr. Loren Thompson, a native of the community, has contributed to our research. Although Mr. Thompson has not fully answered our question we see his information is informative, interesting, and it is greatly appreciated. Does anyone know more about Ostend?

"OSTEND" THE NAME

The application of the name, "Ostend," to an old settler community located almost equally along either side of the south half of the border between Greenwood and McHenry Townships, is fact, but where the terminology arrived from or by whom suggested is both speculative and legendary. The first recorded use in the community of the label was in 1846 when a Postoffice was established in South Greenwood Township with Mr. Lyman E. Burr, a Mexican War Veteran appointed Postmaster.

Mr. Burr, who died July 26, 1849, was burried in Fairview Cemetery, a location in South Greenwood Township near which he had long been associated as a pioneer settler and property owner. In 1846, upon the return of Mr. Burr from service in the Mexican conflict, the former soldier enjoyed a hero's welcome and with approving neighbors received a Washington appointment as Postmaster of Greenwood Township's first Postoffice. Also, the Postoffice was first of several community services to be called "Ostend."

Little is known of that exact early location; however, following the pattern established by other frontier Postoffices, it could well be expected to have been stationed in the residence of the Postmaster. It is quite conclusive, therefore, that in 1846 Ostend opened its initial Postoffice in the home of Mr. Lyman Burr. Since Mr. Burr was the owner of several parcels of property in both Sections 25 and 26 during the years he presided as Postmaster, it remains uncertain which one of them offered Ostend Postoffice its earliest location.

After the demise of Mr. Burr in 1849, the Postmaster who followed was Mr. Horatio Willis, a resident of Section 25, Greenwood Township, whose Postoffice home location was on Sherman Hill-Woodstock Road, now called West Route 120, about one mile west of the Greenwood-McHenry Township line. In 1852, Ostend Postoffice moved into McHenry Township to a site on the same West Route 120 thoroughfare to section 30 and directly opposite the later placement of Ostend's brick schoolhouse. This Postoffice location, which housed the newly appointed William D. Hoege as Postmaster, well became the longest in duration in Ostend history for it is believed to have served the community fifteen years or more.

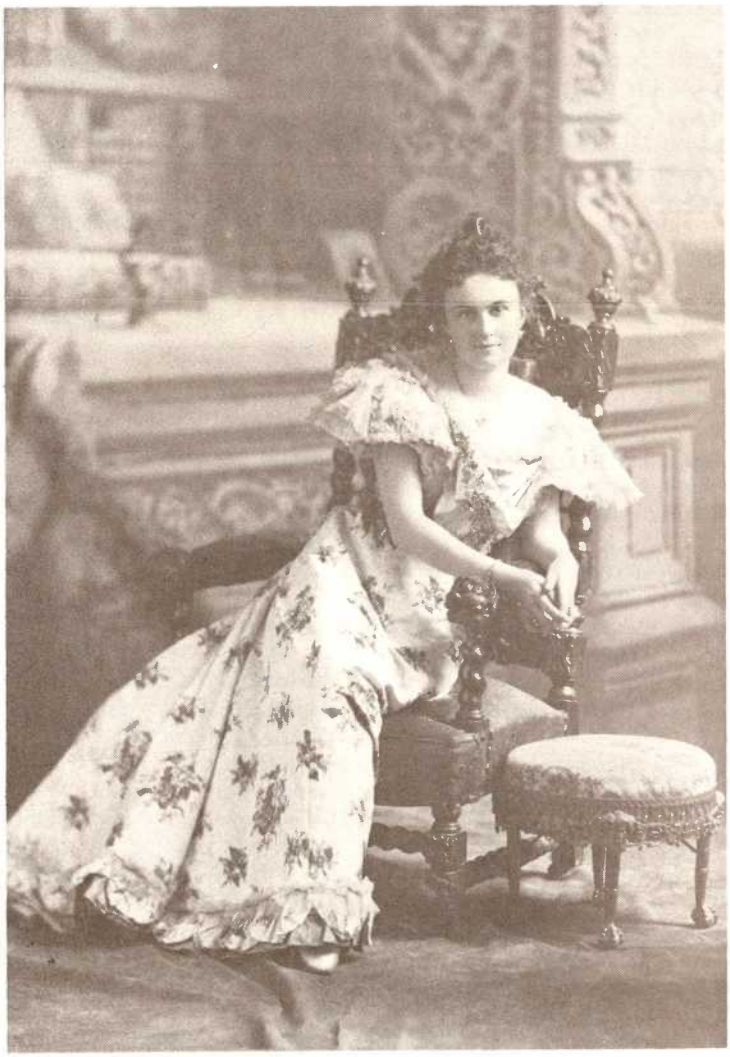
December 1852, at the time the Postoffice was moved to McHenry Township to start a long tenure, marked the beginning of the use of the Ostend label in that Township. At that precise time, however, there were long functioning endeavors in a neighbor Township Section, all of varied names, only one--the Cemetery--later assumed the title of Ostend and that did not occur until twenty years after Postmaster Hoege brought the name to McHenry Township in 1852.

A BIT ABOUT MR. LOREN THOMPSON

If there were a "Who's Who" in Ostend, Mr. Thompson would surely be high on the list. Born in the community, he has many memories of the past. He served on the school board of the Ostend School (District #37) for many years. He is presently writing a book about the lives of the persons buried in the little Ostend Cemetery. This cemetery is especially dear to Mr. Thompson for his great-grandmother was the first to be buried there. When Apollos Thompson was bringing his wife Lucinda to their new farm in Illinois, she became ill and died on December 25, 1842 shortly before reaching McHenry County. The grieving husband buried his wife in a plot on his new farm which became known as the "Thompson Burying Ground" and became a community cemetery.

Through the years, the little cemetery became the object of neglect, overgrown with weeds and with crumbling headstones. Loren Thompson spearheaded a movement to interest descendants of persons buried there and others who might care to join in a fund-raising drive. This project was successful, and now a trust fund assures perpetual care. The Ostend Cemetery is now immaculately trimmed and neat in appearance. Everett Thomas of Woodstock who is one of the cemetery's directors has been doing the excellent job of maintenance. His great-grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Thomas are among those buried there.

Incidentally, both Mr. Thompson and Mr. Thomas are members of the Historical Society.



Is there anyone who can tell us who this lovely lady was? On Christmas, 1898, she sent this picture to the Crumb family in Harvard with the inscription on the back, "With love to all the Crumbs and wishes for a happy Christmas from- Jenny".

This is not a "Who-is-it?". The gentleman is Edward Ayer, son of the E. G. Ayer who founded Harvard. This Mr. Ayer was a Civil War veteran, having served the Union with honor and distinction; he returned to Harvard following the war and became a wholesale dealer in telegraph poles, railway ties, and posts and a lumber dealer of Arizona, with his younger brother as secretary-treasurer and general superintendent of the Arizona part of the business. Edward later made Chicago and Lake Geneva his home. He was one of the founders of the Field Museum and the collection of Indian artifacts he donated to that institution is still the nucleus for the very fine aggregation they can exhibit; he was also one of the founders of the Newberry library.

The purpose of showing the picture is to see if there is anyone who can give us any information about what has become of the little boy. He was Hosmer Ayer Johnson, grandson of Edward E. Ayer and this picture was an 1894 Christmas gift to his great frandmother, Mary Titcomb Ayer. Remote cousins in the Harvard area say he was still living the last they knew but can give no more information. Can anyone else?

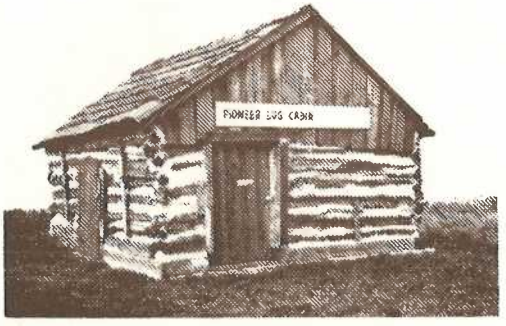
"We are taxed in our bread and wine; in our income and our investments; on our land and property, not only for base creatures who do not deserve the name of men; for foreign nations who bow to us and accept our largesse and promise to assist in keeping the peace--these mendicant nations who will destroy us when we show a moment of weakness or when our treasury is bare, and surely it is becoming bare...were they bound to us by ties of love they would not ask for our gold...they hate and despise us, and who shall say we are worth of more?" This HAS appeared in our Congressional Record, but it is a statement first made by Senator M. Tullius Cicero--the very gentleman whose writings you studied in high school if you went that far in any Latin course. He said this is the Roman Senate about fifty years before the birth of Christ. Surely a knowledge of history can be of help to us in our modern day life, in many, many ways.

SHARE AND PRESERVE McHENRY COUNTY HISTORY.
JOIN THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Indians made a paste of hickory ashes and vinegar to cure corns. The puzzle is where did Indians, whose only shoes were moccasins, get the corns?

Instead of Vick's they used sneezeweed to clear their heads of colds, and bear grease on hot rags or deer skin applications for chest colds. (If bear grease happened to be in short supply, skunk oil could be used--well, at least, he probably did not scatter his contagion!)

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOX 434 • 6422 MAIN STREET •
UNION, ILLINOIS 60180



Not-For-Profit Corporation
U. S. Postage
PAID
Union, Illinois 60180
Permit No. 9